“See You Next Email”
A Partnership Project Between
Roger Williams University and
Middletown High School

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“Thank you for listening to what I have to say. I never express myself like this before. I feel less to be ashamed.”
H.H.G. - Philippines

Project history
• Began as a dissertation project designed to use technology as a tool to overcome time and distance barriers with respect to mentoring writing skills
• ESL Students from Middletown High School (Rhode Island)
• Mentors from Roger Williams University
• Recently completed tenth implementation
Project Overview

- Students are paired one-to-one with a writing mentor from the university.
- Ten emails are sent during the semester on five topics chosen by the ESL teacher.
- Mentors suggest corrections and revisions for each topic.
- Students revise the writing.
- Mentors score the final revision using a rubric.
- Final face-to-face meeting
  - Digital photos
  - Comments
  - Web page
  - Pizza!!

Project Goals for the ESL Students

- Improve the writing skills of ESL students.
- Decrease writing apprehension in ESL students.
- Use technology to overcome time and distance barriers.
- Provide a mentoring experience in a traditional classroom setting.

Goals for the Mentors

- Gain experience using technology.
- Gain experience with ESL students.
- Put the learning theory into practice.
- Improve written communication skills.
- Appreciate what students in other cultures have to offer.
Benefits for the Teachers

• The ESL teacher can provide more opportunities for meaningful writing experiences.
• The University Professor has an ongoing field experience placement for students that has been proven beneficial.

Research

• Mark Warschauer
  – Compared face-to-face and electronic discussion in the second language classroom
• Vivian Zamel
  – Importance of purpose, audience, process in writing
• Joy Reid
  – Differences between international and resident language minority ESL students
Participants

• ESL students at Middletown High School
  – Permanent resident students
  – Foreign exchange students
  – Students with a parent at the Naval Command Center (NCC) (Usually here for one year)

• Mentors
  – Current students in the Classroom Applications of Technology course (mostly sophomores)
  – Undergraduate education majors

Preparation

• Test ESL Students
• Choose mentors based on writing samples and demonstrated interest
• Set up calendar of mailings
• Train mentors
• Train ESL students in email system
• Prepare packets with handbooks and logs

Mentor Training

• Handbook and in-class PowerPoint presentation
• Discussion of error types
• Methods of correcting errors
• Responsibilities
• Schedule
Implementation

• Students email on a schedule that has been determined
• ESL teacher and professor receive copies of all emails
• ESL students receive scores from mentors
• Mentors submit copies of emails and a professional reflection at the end of the semester
• All students meet face-to-face at the end of the project

Project Conclusion

• Students and mentors write short comments for use on the web page
• Digital photographs record the day and are used on the web page (permission is received from participants)
• ESL students share the cultural posters they created in class
• Pizza!!!

Mentor Comments

• I really enjoyed the experience I had during the ESL project. I learned a lot about myself and learned new things about another culture. - Ryan (mentor)
• This project was very interesting. I enjoyed being able to learn about another culture. I would have liked to been able to meet face-to-face more than once. I think that this project was both beneficial to the student as well as to us. - Eliza (mentor)
• This project helped me learn about another country that I normally wouldn't have had the chance to learn about. - Ashley C. (mentor)
Cultural Conversations

Tips for Starting a K-12 University Project
- Set realistic goals
- Planning, planning, planning
- Communication
- Technology Issues

Web Pages
- Fall 2004
  http://faculty.rwu.edu/mthombs/esl2004f/index.html
- Spring 2005
  http://faculty.rwu.edu/mthombs/esl2005s/index.html
For More Information

• Go to http://faculty.rwu.edu/mthombs/NECC2005